

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
August 23, 2000 MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

Review of July 26 meeting notes

No revisions were made to the July 26, 2000 CALFED Ops meeting notes.

Announcements

An Environmental Water Account meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2000 at the Joint Operations Center. The meeting will include the Management Agencies (DFG, USFWS, and NMFS), the Project Agencies (DWR and USBR), as well as key CALFED staff working on the EWA. Public meetings will be scheduled later in the year.

The following handouts were provided at the meeting:

1. SWP Operations Package (includes 2000 Operations Plan Update for Water Operations Management Team), August 23, 2000, DWR, John Leahigh
2. Project Description for Aquatic Filter Barrier Demonstration Project, Southern Energy California, Steven Gallo
3. Winter Run Escapement Estimates, ESO, Sheila Greene

Aquatic Filter Barrier Project

Southern Energy is a large energy firm with projects all around the world; in China, in South America, in New York, and along the Atlantic Ocean. It is proposing to install and test an aquatic filter barrier manufactured by Gunderboom, Inc. at the Contra Costa Power Plant Unit 6 & 7 as part of the Habitat Conservation Plan. Southern Energy has a project on the Hudson River with similar issues of screening fish. Antioch and Pittsburgh are being considered as sites for the barrier project. The barrier would form a curtain with 2-millimeter perforations would have a surface area of 26,000 square feet (about 1700 feet long and 25 to 26 feet deep at the deepest) in order to achieve 5 to 10 gallons per minute per square foot of submerged fabric.

SWRCB

The SWRCB approved the July 25, 2000, request of USBR for Stage 2 use of the Joint Point of Diversion (JPOD) to serve the Tracy golf course. The DFG, the NMFS and the USFWS submitted letters stating that this action would not have a significant impact on fishery resources.

This summer, the Bay-Delta Unit has been inspecting water right holders whose permits contain Term 91. Curtailment notices were sent in June to 34 parties. Of these, about half were scheduled for field inspection. Most were able to demonstrate that either their source was dry, or there was lack of hydraulic continuity between their point of diversion and the Delta, or they had an alternate supply. Four water right holders with Term 91 located in the southern Delta claimed riparian rights in the Delta lowlands as their alternate supply. The areas irrigated by these rights do not abut the watercourse and therefore do not appear to conform to the test for a riparian right. These water right holders have been asked to provide groundwater-pumping records, a copy of a contract, or other evidence to substantiate a claimed riparian right. Other water right irregularities were noted when staff was in the general area, and these are now under investigation.

The SWRCB received the water level response plan, dated August 8, for use of the Joint Point of Diversion prepared by the DWR and the USBR in consultation with the South Delta Water Agency. The SDWA sent a letter to the SWRCB stating its opposition to the plan and asked that the plan not be approved. The Executive Director of the SWRCB must approve the plan before JPOD operations may commence. The SWRCB will send a letter to the parties addressing the plan before the next CALFED Ops meeting.

In early August, the SWRCB received a petition for partial reassignment of a State filed application (A005638) and an application to appropriate water from the Westlands Water District. These filings seek to appropriate 1000 cfs by direct diversion and 100,000 af by storage from the San Joaquin River at Mendota Pool. Westlands is claiming a priority under Water Code sections 11460 and 10505 to support the filings.

OPERATIONS

CVP/SWP Operations Status:

The current CVP and SWP reservoir levels and export rates were presented as per the SWP Operations Package handout. The projects are diverting at full capacity and Delta water quality is not a problem at this time. DWR has struggled this year with its efforts to move the additional 500 cfs at Banks Pumping Plant. Operational constraints such as clogging and spraying for weeds in Clifton Court Forebay, the installation of the K-rails in the approach channel to the Skinner Fish Protection Facility, water levels in the South Delta, and California Independent System Operator energy restrictions have all contributed to limiting pumping during the summer. Similar constraints may be expected in future years.

Temporary Barriers

The three temporary barriers are in place and are operating. Permits are being obtained for the Head of Old River Barrier to be installed at the end of September or early October. This barrier differs from the one installed in the spring in that it is notched to allow upstream passage of adult salmon through Old River. The fall barrier is usually installed under low flow conditions; the objective is to improve flow down the San Joaquin River to facilitate attenuation of a dissolved oxygen sag that occurs each year in the ship turning basin. If flows are high, no fall barrier may be needed.

DWR reported that the culverts on the Grantline Canal Barrier remained opened during June and July to protect delta smelt that lingered in the South Delta. Because flow down the San Joaquin River was relatively high this year, water levels upstream of the ag barriers were generally acceptable. However, there were times when diverters had difficulty pumping water from the channel. As a result, the DAT asked DWR to perform hydrodynamic modeling to compare water levels and flows with, and without the culverts operating on the GLC barrier. The results of that study will be presented to the DAT for discussion.

South Delta Dredging

Dredging should commence the first week of September. Originally, the dredging contractor was to be on site by August 31, but it will take a few more days because oversized loads can not move over the Labor Day weekend. By September 6th or 7th, the contractor should be ready. CALFED or DWR will use the dredge material somewhere or move and market the material. It should amount to 200,000 yards of dredge material.

Delta Cross Channel and Through Delta Facility

CALFED and CVPIA are funding a series of experiments designed to study the effects of Delta Cross Channel operations on salmon migration and water quality. Beginning September 5, the proposed DCC operations are to open the gates for 3 weeks, then to open the gates tidally for 3 weeks, and finally to close the gates for 3 weeks. Also scheduled are 2 weeks for fish studies. The USGS will be measuring flows at the Delta Cross Channel, the Mokelumne River, and Georgiana Slough in conjunction with these studies.

Fishery Status

Salmon: Sheila Greene distributed for comments a handout showing the Winter Run Escapement Estimates as part of the standardized fisheries form being developed with Jim White.

Fall releases from Nimbus for downstream temperature control is still a concern among the fishery agencies. Last month, NMFS asked USBR to consider bypassing water to meet temperature objectives for steelhead. After consultation with the American River Ops Group and the Western Area Power Association, USBR decided to use the cold water pool that may be reached with normal operation of Folsom Dam without bypassing water. The USBR then was able to reduce Nimbus releases later to 1,500 cfs in order to save some of the cold water storage. If water must be bypassed, it will probably occur later in the season when electrical generation will not be as great an issue.

First winter-run length salmon was caught yesterday.

The Steelhead/Spring-Run Biological Assessment is being reviewed.

Splittail: Nothing to report.

Delta Smelt: No delta smelt have been salvaged at either project since 6 fish were caught at the SWP on August 3.

OFF and DAT Update

At the request of CALFED, the No Name Group met earlier this month to discuss changing its name. After much discussion and debate, the NNG agreed upon a new name: it will now be called the Operations and Fisheries Forum.

The regular scheduled conference calls of the DAT are now over and future calls will be scheduled as needed.

Agenda items for Next Meeting . . . September 27, 2000

Explanation of how the Environmental Water Account effects the CALFED Ops Group